

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COPENHAGEN 0120

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, DA

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT FORMATION - NO. 1 - OPENING ROUND

REF: COPENHAGEN 0082

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER POUL HARTLING'S INITIAL ROUND OF POST-ELECTION NEGOTIATIONS REVEALED THAT THERE IS NOT A MAJORITY (90 SEATS) IN PARLIAMENT AGAINST HIS MINORITY LIBERAL GOVERNMENT - THUS GIVING HIM THE OPTION TO CONTINUE.

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HOWEVER, THE BALANCE OF FORCES IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT IS SO STRUCTURED THAT HARTLING COULD FIND HIS GOVERNMENT

EFFECTIVELY STALEMATED WITH RESPECT TO ANY SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATIVE ACTION. THE EVENTUAL POSITION OF THE RADICAL PARTY IS APT TO BE THE KEY TO THIS DILEMMA . END SUMMARY.

1. HARLING CONDUCTED HIS INITIAL ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH ALL PARTIES OVER THE WEEKEND OF JAN 10-13. THESE TALKS CONFIRMED THAT FORMAL LIBERAL-SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION IS VIRTUALLY EXCLUDED. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TOOK AN EVEN MORE ADAMANT STAND THAN DURING THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANY PARTICIPATION OR COOPERATION WITH A LIBERAL-LED GOVERNMENT AND CALLED ON HARLING TO RESIGN IN ORDER TO OPEN THE WAY FOR UNCONDITIONAL TALKS REGARDING FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT.

IT IS ALREADY CLEAR THAT THE FINE BALANCE OF FORCES IN THE NEW FOLKETING (PARLIAMENT) WILL MAKE THE CONTINUATION OF THE HARLING GOVERNMENT VERY DIFFICULT, EITHER AS A MINORITY, SINGLE-PARTY GOVERNMENT OR AS A LIBERAL-LED COALITION.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE PARLIAMENT. WITH RESPECT TO THE QUESTION OF GOVERNMENT FORMATION, THERE ARE BASICALLY FIVE BLOCS WITHIN THE NEW PARLIAMENT. STARTING FROM THE POLITICAL RIGHT THEY ARE:

(1) MOGENS GLISTRUP'S PROGRESS PARTY--(24 SEATS): WHILE STILL CONSIDERED A PARIAH PARTY, THERE IS INCREASING SENTIMENT TO ENDOW THIS RIGHT-WING PROTEST MOVEMENT WITH POLITICAL ACCEPTABILITY, PARTICULARLY SINCE HARLING'S GOVERNMENT MAY ULTIMATELY DEPEND UPON GILSTRUP'S SUPPORT OR, AT LEAST, TOLERATION.

(2) LIBERAL CENTER BLOC--(65 OR 66 SEATS): ALTHOUGH THE PARTIES OF THE LIBERAL CENTER REMAIN SHOCKED AND ANGERED BY HARLING'S "CANNIBALIZING" OF THEM, THE CONSERVATIVES (10 SEATS), CENTER DEMOCRATS (4 SEATS), AND THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLES PARTY (9 SEATS) ARE ALL CONSTRAINED BY THEIR ANTI-SOCIALIST CONSTITUENCIES AND INTERESTS TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT HARLING'S LIBERAL GOVERNMENT. ALSO COUNTED IN THIS GROUP SHOULD BE

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NIKOLAJ ROSING, THE MEMBER ELECTED BY THE MODERATE ALLIANCE IN GREENLAND.

(3) THE RADICALS--(13 SEATS): THE RADICALS CAN- NOT NOW BE COUNTED AS PART OF THE "LIBERAL CENTER" BLOC AND ARE EXPECTED TO ACT AS AN INDEPENDENT FORCE FOR SEVERAL REASONS: (A) HARLING'S ATTEMPT TO ABSORB THE MIDDLE PARTIES TOOK A HEAVY TOLL OF THE RADICALS, ALIENATING BAUNSGAARD: (B) BAUNSGAARD'S HOPE OF EXPLOITING A BRIDGING ROLE BETWEEN THE SOCIAL

DEMOCRATS AND THE LIBERALS IS STILL VIABLE THOUGH TO A MORE LIMITED EXTENT THAN HE HAD HOPED; AND (C) THE RADICALS' POOR ELECTION SHOWING HAS STRENGTHENED THAT ELEMENT WITHIN THE PARTY WHICH ADVOCATES THE HISTORICAL ALLIANCE WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

(4) THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC BLOC--(64 TO 65 SEATS): THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (53 SEATS) AND THE SOCIALIST PEOPLES PARTY (SPP) (9 SEATS) WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE MUTUAL INTERESTS. THEY ARE BOTH "OLD" PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT AND BOTH SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY. BECAUSE OF ITS NEED TO COMPETE WITH THE COMMUNISTS AND LEFT SOCIALISTS, THE SPP WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE CAPABLE OF ENTERING ANY FORMAL GOVERNMENTAL COALITION WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, ESPECIALLY IF THE RADICALS OR OTHER NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES WERE TO BE INCLUDED. THE SPP'S PROPER PLACING, THEREFORE, AND THE ROLE IT IS ENDEAVORING TO ASSUME, IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE FAR LEFT PROTEST PARTIES. TWO, AND POSSIBLY THREE, OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM THE FAEROES AND GREENLAND SHOULD ALSO BE COUNTED WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC BLOC.

(5) THE FAR LEFT PROTESTBLOC--(11 SEATS); THE COMMUNISTS (7 SEATS) AND THE LEFT SOCIALISTS (4 SEATS) CONSTITUTE A PARIAH GROUP ON THE SOCIALIST FAR LEFT. ALTHOUGH WILLING TO GIVE TACIT SUPPORT TO ANY FORM OF SOCIALIST MINORITY GOVERNMENT, THE VERY FACT THAT THEY WOULD SUPPORT A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC-LED COALITION SERVES TO COMPLICATE PARTICIPATION BY THE RADICAL PARTY AND

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TO EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF SUPPORT BY THE

CHRISTIANS OR THE CENTER DEMOCRATS.

3. HARTLING'S DILEMMA. THE OPENING ROUND OF TALKS

CONFIRMED THAT THERE WAS "NO MAJORITY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT." THIS MEANT THAT HARTLING HAD OBTAINED ASSURANCE OF THE SUPPORT OF THE PARTIES IN THE LIBERAL CENTER BLOC, AND OF NIKOLAJ ROSING (HARTLING REPORTEDLY OFFERED HIM THE POST OF MINISTER FOR GREENLAND IN AN EVENTUAL EXPANDED GOVERNMENT); AND HAD ASCERTAINED THAT GLISTRUP WOULD NOT

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SUPPORT A RADICAL OR SOCIALIST MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE. CONSEQUENTLY, HARTLING IS ASSURED OF A ONE-VOTE MAJORITY POSITION (90 TO 89) IF HE HAS TO GO TO THE MAT FOR SURVIVAL AGAINST A POSSIBLE RADICAL-SOCIALIST BLOC COMBINATION.

HARTLING'S DILEMMA, HOWEVER, LIES IN THE FACT THAT, THOUGH IT IS ACCEPTABLE TO DEPEND UPON GLISTRUP IN SUCH SURVIVAL SITUATIONS (WHERE ONE PARIAH GROUP OFFSETS THE OTHER), IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO DEPEND UPON GLISTRUP AS A NORMAL SUPPORT PARTY FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM. TO DO SO WOULD BE CONSIDERED A RESURRECTION OF THE "BLACK ALLIANCE" OF LAST MAY. IT WOULD VERY LIKELY ALIENATE THE CENTER DEMOCRATS AND THE CHRISTIANS AND IT WOULD BRING FORTH A POWERFUL PROTEST FROM THE ENTIRE LABOR MOVEMENT. HARTLING THEREFORE NEEDS THE SUPPORT OF THE RADICAL PARTY.

4. KEY ROLE OF THE RADICAL PARTY. THE RADICALS WILL THUS PLAY SIGNIFICANT ROLE BEFORE THE SHAPE OF THE GOVERNMENT IS FINALLY DETERMINED. WITH BOTH THE LIBERAL CENTER

AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC BLOCS ALMOST EVENLY BALANCED, THE RADICALS' 13 VOTES WILL BE THE DECISIVE SWING-WEIGHT AT THE NORMAL PARLIAMENTARY OPERATING LEVEL. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT PROBABLE THAT HARTLING CAN BRING THE RADICALS INTO HIS LIBERAL CENTER ALLIANCE AGAIN, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO DETACH THEM SUFFICIENTLY FROM THEIR PRESENT RAPPROCHEMEENT WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO GIVE HARTLING THE PROSPECTS OF SOME LEGISLATIVE MANEUVERABILITY.

5. ROLE OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. IF HARTLING IS ABLE TO OBTAIN EVEN A LIMITED AGREEMENT WITH THE RADICALS HE CAN CONCEIVABLY SURVIVE; BUT TO SURVIVE IS NOT TO GOVERN, AND FOR THE LATTER SOME INFORMAL ACCOMMODATION, AT LEAST, WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WILL BE NECESSARY. THE MAJOR ISSUE FACING THE COUNTRY IS THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, AND HARTLING HAS JUSTIFIED CALLING THE ELECTION ON THE ARGUMENT THAT HIS ECONOMIC CRISIS PLAN WAS A NECESSITY. FOR CONTINUED CREDIBILITY HE MUST CONSEQUENTLY PRESERVE SOME VESTIGES OF THAT PLAN, IF NOTHING MORE THAN A CERTAIN WAGE RESTRAINT WHICH HE CAN CALL A "WAGE PAUSE". THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC BLOC, HOWEVER, HAS THE PREPONDERANCE OF POWER ON THE LABOR MARKET. THE LEADERS OF BOTH THE SOCIAL

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DEMOCRATS AND THE SOCIALIST PEOPLES PARTY HAVE THUS FAR FIRMLY OPPOSED ANY LEGISLATIVE INTERFERENCE (BY A LIBERAL GOVERNMENT) IN THE NATIONAL WAGE NEGOTIATIONS.

6. A SECOND ROOUND OF INTER-PARTY TALKS IS NOW UNDER WAY TO CLARIFY THE POSITION OF THE RADICALS AND TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE ARE ANY PROSPECTS FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S OBTAINING THE SUPPORT OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS FOR A REVISED ECONOMIC CRISIS PLAN. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES WITHIN THE LIBERAL PARTY, THESE TWO POINTS MUST BE CLARIFIED IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. THE GOVERNMENT IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE EC COMMISSION, SINCE THE COMMISSION MUST, IF THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN HAS SOME PROSPECTS OF SUCCESS, TAKE A DECISION ON THE PROPOSED FREEZING OF AGRICULTURAL PRICES. THE SECOND ROUND MAY THUS BE THE CRUCIAL ONE, IF HARTLING'S LIBERALS ARE TO CONTINUE AS AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT.

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